CONJECTURES

ON

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION.

[Price One Shilling and Six Pence.]

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IN A

LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR

OF

Sir CHARLES GRANDISON.

Si habet aliquod tanquam pabulum ſtudii, & doctrinæ, otioſâ ſenectute nihil eſt jucundius. CIC.

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, in *The Strand*; and R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-Mall.*

M.DCC.LIX.

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A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR OF Sir CHARLES GRANDISON.

Dear Sir,

WE confeſs the Follies of Youth without a Bluſh; not ſo, thoſe of Age. However, keep me a little in countenance by conſidering, that Age wants Amuſement more, tho'

it can juſtify them leſs, than the preceding periods of life. How you may reliſh the Paſtime here ſent you, I know not. It is miſcellaneous in its Nature, ſomewhat licentious in its Conduct; and, perhaps, not over important in its End. However, I have endeavoured to make ſome amends, by digreſſing into ſubjects more important, and more ſuitable to my ſeaſon of life. A ſerious Thought ſtanding ſingle among many of a lighter nature, will ſometimes ſtrike the careleſs Wanderer after Amuſement only, with uſeful Awe: As monumental Marbles ſcattered in a wide Pleaſure-Garden (and ſuch there are) will call to Recollection thoſe who would never have ſought it in a Church-yard-walk of mournful Yews.

To One ſuch Monument I may conduct you, in which is a hidden Luſtre, like the ſepulchral Lamps of old; but not like them will This be extinguiſhed, but ſhine the brighter for being produced, after ſo long Concealment, into open Day.

You remember that your worthy Patron, and our common Friend, put ſome Queſtions on the *Serious Drama*, at the ſame time when he deſired our Sentiments on *Original*, and on *Moral* Compoſition. Tho' I deſpair of breaking thro' the frozen Obſtructions of Age, and Care's incumbent Cloud, into that Flow of thought, and Brightneſs of expreſſion, which ſuch polite Subjects require; yet will I hazard ſome Conjectures on them.

I begin with *Original* Compoſition; but, firſt, a few Thoughts on Compoſition in general. Some are of Opinion, that its Growth, at preſent, is too luxuriant; and that the Preſs is overcharged. Overcharged, I think, it could never be, if none were admitted, but ſuch as brought their Imprimatur from *ſound Underſtanding*, and the *Public Good*. Wit, indeed, however brilliant, ſhould not be permitted to gaze ſelf-enamour'd on its uſeleſs Charms, in that Fountain of Fame (if ſo I may call the Preſs,) if Beauty is all that it has to boaſt; but, like the firſt *Brutus*, it ſhould ſacrifice its moſt darling Offſpring to the ſacred intereſts of Virtue, and real Service of mankind.

This Reſtriction allowed, the more Compoſition the better. To

Men

Men of Letters, and Leiſure, it is not only a noble Amuſement, but a ſweet Refuge; it improves their Parts, and promotes their Peace: It opens a back-door out of the Buſtle of this buſy, and idle world, into a delicious Garden of Moral and Intellectual fruits and flowers; the Key of which is denied to the reſt of mankind. When ſtung with idle Anxieties, or teazed with fruitleſs Impertinence, or yawning over inſipid Diverſions, then we perceive the Bleſſing of a letter'd receſs. With what a Guſt do we retire to our diſintereſted, and immortal Friends in our Cloſet, and find our minds, when applied to ſome favourite Theme, as naturally, and as eaſily quieted, and refreſhed, as a peeviſh Child (and peeviſh Children are we all till we fall aſleep) when laid to

the breaſt? Our Happineſs no longer lives on Charity; nor bids fair for a fall, by leaning on that moſt precarious, and thorny Pillow, another's Pleaſure, for our repoſe. How independent of the world is he, who can daily find new Acquaintance, that at once entertain, and improve him, in the little World, the minute but fruitful Creation, of his own mind?

Theſe advantages *Compoſition* affords us, whether we write ourſelves, or in more humble amuſement peruſe the Works of others. While we buſtle thro' the thronged walks of public Life, it gives us a reſpite, at leaſt, from Care; a pleaſing Pauſe of refreſhing Recollection. If the Country is our Choice, or Fate, there it reſcues us from *Sloth* and *Senſuality*,

Senſuality, which, like obſcene vermin, are apt gradually to creep unperceived into the delightful bowers of our retirement, and to poiſon all its ſweets. Conſcious guilt robs the Roſe of its ſcent, the Lilly of of its luſtre; and makes an *Eden* a deflowered, and diſmal ſcene.

Moreover, if we conſider life's endleſs Evils, what can be more prudent, than to provide for conſolation under them? A conſolation under them the wiſeſt of men have found in the pleaſures of the Pen. Witneſs, among many more, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, *Tully*, *Ovid*, *Seneca*, *Pliny* the younger, who ſays, *In uxoris infirmitate, & amicorum periculo, aut morte turbatus, ad ſtudia, unicum doloris levamentum, confugio.* And why not add to theſe

their modern Equals, *Rawleigh*, *Milton*, *Clarendon*, under the ſame ſhield, unwounded by misfortune, and nobly ſmiling in diſtreſs?

Compoſition was a Cordial to Theſe under the Frowns of Fortune; but Evils there are, which her Smiles cannot prevent, or cure. Among theſe are the Languors of old Age. If thoſe are held honourable, who in a hand benumbed by Time have graſped the juſt ſword in defence of their Country; ſhall they be leſs eſteemed, whoſe unſteady Pen vibrates to the laſt in the cauſe of Religion, of Virtue, of Learning? Both Theſe are happy in This, that by fixing their attention on objects moſt important, they eſcape numberleſs little Anxieties, and that *Tedium Vitæ* which hangs often ſo heavy

heavy on its evening hours. May not This inſinuate ſome Apology for my ſpilling Ink, and ſpoiling Paper, ſo late in Life?

But there are, who write with vigor, and ſucceſs, to the world's Delight, and their own Renown. Theſe are the glorious fruits where Genius prevails. The mind of a man of Genius is a fertile and pleaſant field, pleaſant as *Elyſium*, and fertile as *Tempe*; it enjoys a perpetual Spring. Of that Spring, *Originals* are the faireſt Flowers: *Imitations* are of quicker growth, but fainter bloom. *Imitations* are of two kinds; one of Nature, one of Authors: The firſt we call *Originals*, and confine the term *Imitation* to the ſecond. I ſhall not enter into the curious enquiry of what is, or

is

is not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *Original*, content with what all muſt allow, that ſome Compoſitions are more ſo than others; and the more they are ſo, I ſay, the better. *Originals* are, and ought to be, great Favourites, for they are great Benefactors; they extend the Republic of Letters, and add a new province to its dominion: *Imitators* only give us a ſort of Duplicates of what we had, poſſibly much better, before; increaſing the mere Drug of books, while all that makes them valuable, *Knowlege* and *Genius*, are at a ſtand. The pen of an *Original* Writer, like *Armida*'s wand, out of a barren waſte calls a blooming ſpring: Out of that blooming ſpring an *Imitator* is a tranſplanter of Laurels, which ſometimes die on removal, always languiſh in a foreign ſoil.

But

But ſuppoſe an *Imitator* to be moſt excellent (and ſuch there are), yet ſtill he but nobly builds on another's foundation; his Debt is, at leaſt, equal to his Glory; which therefore, on the ballance, cannot be very great. On the contrary, an *Original*, tho' but indifferent (its *Originality* being ſet aſide,) yet has ſomething to boaſt; it is ſomething to ſay with him in *Horace*,

Meo *ſum Pauper in ære*;

and to ſhare ambition with no leſs than *Cæſar*, who declared he had rather be the Firſt in a Village, than the Second at *Rome*.

Still farther: An *Imitator* ſhares his crown, if he has one, with the choſen Object of his Imitation; an *Original* enjoys an undivided applauſe.

Nothing no very great Sum. Wonderfull!

plauſe. An *Original* may be ſaid to be of a *vegetable* nature; it riſes ſpontaneouſly from the vital root of Genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*: *Imitations* are often a ſort of *Manufacture* wrought up by thoſe *Mechanics*, *Art*, and *Labour*, out of pre-exiſtent materials not their own.

Again: We read *Imitation* with ſomewhat of his languor, who liſtens to a twice-told tale: Our ſpirits rouze at an *Original*; that is a perfect ſtranger, and all throng to learn what news from a foreign land: And tho' it comes, like an *Indian* Prince, adorned with feathers only, having little of weight; yet of our attention it will rob the more Solid, if not equally New: Thus every Teleſcope is lifted at a new-diſcovered ſtar; it makes a hundred

Aſtro-

Aſtronomers in a moment, and denies equal notice to the ſun. But if an *Original*, by being as excellent, as new, adds admiration to ſurprize, then are we at the Writer's mercy; on the ſtrong wing of his Imagination, we are ſnatched from *Britain* to *Italy*, from Climate to Climate, from Pleaſure to Pleaſure; we have no Home, no Thought, of our own; till the Magician drops his Pen: And then falling down into ourſelves, we awake to flat Realities, lamenting the change, like the Beggar who dreamt himſelf a Prince.

It is with Thoughts, as it is with Words; and with both, as with Men; they may grow old, and die. Words tarniſhed, by paſſing thro' the mouths of the Vulgar, are laid aſide

aſide as inelegant, and obſolete. So Thoughts, when become too common, ſhould loſe their Currency; and we ſhould ſend new metal to the Mint, that is, new meaning to the Preſs. The Diviſion of tongues at *Babel* did not more effectually debar men from *making themſelves a name* (as the Scripture ſpeaks,) than the too great Concurrence, or Union of tongues will do for ever. We may as well grow good by another's Virtue, or fat by another's Food, as famous by another's Thought. The world will pay its Debt of Praiſe but once; and inſtead of applauding, explode a ſecond Demand, as a Cheat.

If it is ſaid, that moſt of the *Latin* Claſſics, and all the *Greek*, except, perhaps, *Homer*, *Pindar*, and

and *Anacreon*, are in the number of *Imitators*, yet receive our higheſt applauſe; our anſwer is, That They, tho' not *real*, are *accidental Originals*; the works they imitated, few excepted, are loſt: They, on their Fathers' Deceaſe, enter, as lawful Heirs, on their Eſtates in Fame: The Fathers of our Copyiſts are ſtill in poſſeſſion; and ſecured in it, in ſpite of *Goths*, and Flames, by the perpetuating power of the Preſs. Very late muſt a modern *Imitator*'s Fame arrive, if it waits for their Deceaſe.

An *Original* enters early upon Reputation: *Fame*, fond of new Glories, ſounds her Trumpet in Triumph at its birth; and yet how few are awaken'd by it into the noble ambition of like attempts?

Ambition

Ambition is ſometimes no Vice in life; it is always a Virtue in Compoſition. High in the towering *Alps* is the Fountain of the *Po*; high in Fame, and in Antiquity, is the Fountain of an *Imitator*'s Undertaking; but the River, and the Imitation, humbly creep along the Vale. So few are our *Originals*, that, if all other books were to be burnt, the letter'd World would reſemble ſome Metropolis in flames, where a few incombuſtible buildings, a Fortreſs, Temple, or Tower, lift their Heads, in melancholy Grandeur, amid the mighty ruin. Compared with this Conflagration, old *Omar* lighted up but a ſmall Bonfire, when he heated the baths of the Barbarians, for eight months together, with the famed *Alexandrian* Library's ineſtimable ſpoils,

that

that no prophane book might obſtruct the triumphant progreſs of his holy *Alcoran* round the Globe.

But why are *Originals* ſo few? not becauſe the Writer's harveſt is over, the great Reapers of Antiquity having left nothing to be gleaned after them; nor becauſe the human mind's teeming time is paſt, or becauſe it is incapable of putting forth unprecedented births; but becauſe illuſtrious Examples *engroſs*, *prejudice*, and *intimidate*. They *engroſs* our attention, and ſo prevent a due inſpection of ourſelves; they *prejudice* our Judgment in favour of their abilities, and ſo leſſen the ſenſe of our own; and they *intimidate* us with the ſplendor of their Renown, and thus under Diffidence bury our ſtrength. Nature's Im-

poſſibilities, and thoſe of Diffidence, lie wide aſunder.

Let it not be ſuſpected, that I would weakly inſinuate any thing in favour of the Moderns, as compared with antient Authors; no, I am lamenting their great Inferiority. But I think it is no *neceſſary* Inferiority; that it is not from divine Deſtination, but from ſome cauſe far beneath the moon: I think that human Souls, thro' all periods, are equal; that due care, and exertion, would ſet us nearer our immortal Predeceſſors than we are at preſent; and he who queſtions and confutes this, will ſhow abilities not a little tending toward a proof of that Equality, which he denies.

After all, the firſt Ancients had

no Merit in being *Originals*: They could *not* be *Imitators*. Modern Writers have a *Choice* to make; and therefore have a Merit in their power. They may ſoar in the Regions of *Liberty*, or move in the ſoft Fetters of eaſy *Imitation*; and *Imitation* has as many plauſible Reaſons to urge, as *Pleaſure* had to offer to *Hercules*. *Hercules* made the Choice of an Hero, and *ſo* became immortal.

Yet let not Aſſertors of Claſſic Excellence imagine, that I deny the Tribute it ſo well deſerves. He that admires not antient Authors, betrays a ſecret he would conceal, and tells the world, that he does not underſtand them. Let us be as far from neglecting, as from copying, their admirable Compoſitions: Sa-

cred be their Rights, and inviolable their Fame. Let our Underſtandings feed on theirs; they afford the nobleſt nouriſhment: But let them nouriſh, not annihilate, our own. When we read, let our Imagination kindle at their Charms; when we write, let our Judgment ſhut them out of our Thoughts; treat even *Homer* himſelf, as his royal Admirer was treated by the Cynic; bid him ſtand aſide, nor ſhade our Compoſition from the beams of our own Genius; for nothing *Original* can riſe, nothing Immortal can ripen, in any other Sun.

Muſt we then, you ſay, not imitate antient Authors? Imitate them, by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine *Iliad*, does not imitate *Homer*; but he who

who takes the ſame method, which *Homer* took, for arriving at a capacity of accompliſhing a work ſo great. Tread in his ſteps to the ſole Fountain of Immortality; drink where he drank, at the true *Helicon*, that is, at the breaſt of Nature: Imitate; but imitate not the *Compoſition*, but the *Man*. For may not this Paradox paſs into a Maxim? *viz.* "The leſs we copy the re-
"nowned Antients, we ſhall re-
"ſemble them the more."

But poſſibly you may reply, that you muſt either imitate *Homer*, or depart from Nature. Not ſo: For ſuppoſe You was to change place, in time, with *Homer*; then, if you write naturally, you might as well charge *Homer* with an imitation of You. Can you be ſaid to imitate

Homer for writing *ſo*, as you would have written, if *Homer* had never been? As far as a regard to Nature, and ſound Senſe, will permit a Departure from your great Predeceſſors; ſo far, ambitiouſly, depart from them; the farther from them in *Similitude*, the nearer are you to them in *Excellence*; you riſe by it into an *Original*; become a noble Collateral, not an humble Deſcendant from them. Let us build our Compoſitions with the Spirit, and in the Taſte, of the Antients; but not with their Materials: Thus will they reſemble the ſtructures of *Pericles* at *Athens*, which *Plutarch* commends for having had an air of Antiquity as ſoon as they were built. All Eminence, and Diſtinction, lies out of the beaten road; Excurſion, and Deviation, are neceſſary

ſary to find it; and the more remote your Path from the Highway, the more reputable; if, like poor *Gulliver* (of whom anon,) you fall not into a Ditch, in your way to Glory.

What glory to come near, what glory to reach, what glory (preſumptuous thought!) to ſurpaſs, our Predeceſſors? And is that then in Nature abſolutely impoſſible? Or is it not, rather, contrary to Nature to fail in it? Nature herſelf ſets the Ladder, all wanting is our ambition to climb. For by the bounty of Nature we are as ſtrong as our Predeceſſors; and by the favour of Time (which is but another Round in Nature's Scale,) we ſtand on higher ground. As to the *Firſt*, were *they* more than men? Or are *we* leſs? Are not our minds caſt in the ſame

mould with thoſe before the Flood? The flood affected Matter, Mind eſcaped. As to the *Second*; tho' we are Moderns, the World is an Antient; more antient far, than when they filled it with their Fame, whom we moſt admire. Have we not their Beauties, as ſtars, to guide; their Defects, as rocks, to be ſhunn'd; the Judgment of Ages on both, as a chart to conduct, and a ſure helm to ſteer us in our paſſage to greater Perfection than Theirs? And ſhall we be ſtopt in our rival pretenſions to Fame by this juſt Reproof?

Stat contra, dicitque tibi tua Pagina, Fur es. MART.

It is by a ſort of noble Contagion, from a general familiarity with their Writings, and not by any particular ſordid Theft, that we can be the

better for thoſe who went before us. Hope we, from Plagiariſm, any Dominion in Literature; as that of *Rome* aroſe from a neſt of Thieves?

Rome was a powerful Ally to many States; antient Authors are our powerful Allies; but we muſt take heed, that they do not ſuccour, till they enſlave, after the manner of *Rome*. Too formidable an Idea of their Superiority, like a Spectre, would fright us out of a proper uſe of our Wits; and dwarf our Underſtanding, by making a Giant of theirs. Too great Awe for them lays Genius under reſtraint, and denies it that free ſcope, that full elbow-room, which is requiſite for ſtriking its moſt maſterly ſtrokes. Genius is a Maſter-workman, Learning is but an Inſtrument; and an Inſtrument, tho'

moſt

moſt valuable, yet not always indiſpenſable. Heaven will not admit of a Partner in the accompliſhment of ſome favourite Spirits; but rejecting all human means, aſſumes the whole glory to itſelf. Have not ſome, tho' not famed for Erudition, *ſo* written, as almoſt to perſuade us, that they ſhone brighter, and ſoared higher, for eſcaping the boaſted aid of that proud Ally?

Nor is it ſtrange; for what, for the moſt part, mean we by Genius, but the Power of accompliſhing great things without the means generally reputed neceſſary to that end? A *Genius* differs from a *good Underſtanding*, as a Magician from a good Architect; *That* raiſes his ſtructure by means inviſible; *This* by the ſkilful uſe of common tools.

Hence

Hence Genius has ever been ſuppoſed to partake of ſomething Divine. *Nemo unquam vir magnus fuit, ſine aliquo afflatu Divino.*

Learning, deſtitute of this ſuperior Aid, is fond, and proud, of what has coſt it much pains; is a great Lover of Rules, and Boaſter of famed Examples: As Beauties leſs perfect, who owe half their Charms to cautious Art, ſhe inveighs againſt natural unſtudied Graces, and ſmall harmleſs Indecorums, and ſets rigid Bounds to that Liberty, to which Genius often owes its ſupreme Glory; but the No-Genius its frequent Ruin. For unpreſcribed Beauties, and unexampled Excellence, which are Characteriſtics of *Genius*, lie without the Pale of *Learning*'s Authorities, and Laws;

Laws; which Pale, Genius muſt leap to come at them: But by that Leap, if Genius is wanting, we break our Necks; we loſe that little credit, which poſſibly we might have enjoyed before. For Rules, like Crutches, are a needful Aid to the Lame, tho' an Impediment to the Strong. A *Homer* caſts them away; and, like his *Achilles*,

Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat,

by native force of mind. There is ſomething in Poetry beyond Proſe-reaſon; there are Myſteries in it not to be explained, but admired; which render mere Proſe-men Infidels to their Divinity. And here pardon a ſecond Paradox; *viz.* "*Genius* often "then deſerves moſt to be praiſed, "when it is moſt ſure to be con-"demned; that is, when its Excel-

"lence,

"lence, from mounting high, to "weak eyes is quite out of ſight."

If I might ſpeak farther of Learning, and Genius, I would compare Genius to Virtue, and Learning to Riches. As Riches are moſt wanted where there is leaſt Virtue; ſo Learning where there is leaſt Genius. As Virtue without much Riches can give Happineſs, ſo Genius without much Learning can give Renown. As it is ſaid in *Terence*, *Pecuniam negligere interdum maximum eſt Lucrum*; ſo to neglect of Learning, Genius ſometimes owes its greater glory. Genius, therefore, leaves but the ſecond place, among men of letters, to the Learned. It is their Merit, and Ambition, to fling light on the works of Genius, and point out its Charms. We moſt juſtly

reverence

reverence their informing Radius for that favour; but we muſt much more admire the radiant Stars pointed out by them.

A Star of the firſt magnitude among the Moderns was *Shakeſpeare*; among the Antients, *Pindar*; who, (as *Voſſius* tells us) boaſted of his No-learning, calling himſelf the Eagle, for his Flight above it. And ſuch Genii as theſe may, indeed, have much reliance on their own native powers. For Genius may be compared to the Body's natural Strength; Learning to the ſuperinduced Accoutrements of Arms: if the Firſt is equal to the propoſed exploit, the Latter rather encumbers, than aſſiſts; rather retards, than promotes, the Victory. *Sacer nobis ineſt Deus*, ſays *Seneca*. With

regard

regard to the Moral world, *Conſcience*, with regard to the Intellectual, *Genius*, is that God within. Genius can ſet us right in Compoſition, without the Rules of the Learned; as Conſcience ſets us right in Life, without the Laws of the Land: *This*, ſingly, can make us Good, as Men; *That*, ſingly, as Writers, can, ſometimes, make us Great.

I ſay, ſometimes, becauſe there is a Genius, which ſtands in need of Learning to make it ſhine. Of Genius there are two ſpecies, an Earlier, and a Later; or call them *Infantine*, and *Adult*. An Adult Genius comes out of Nature's hand, as *Pallas* out of *Jove*'s head, at full growth, and mature: *Shakeſpeare*'s Genius was of this kind: On the contrary, *Swift* ſtumbled at the threſhold, and ſet

out

out for Diſtinction on feeble knees: His was an Infantine Genius; a Genius, which, like other Infants, muſt be nurſed, and educated, or it will come to nought: Learning is its Nurſe, and Tutor; but this Nurſe may overlay with an indigeſted Load, which ſmothers common ſenſe; and this Tutor may miſlead, with pedantic Prejudice, which vitiates the beſt underſtanding: As too great admirers of the Fathers of the Church have ſometimes ſet up their Authority againſt the true Senſe of Scripture; ſo too great admirers of the Claſſical Fathers have ſometimes ſet up their Authority, or Example, againſt Reaſon.

Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu
Fabula.

So ſays *Horace*, ſo ſays antient Example.

ample. But Reaſon has not ſubſcribed. I know but one book that can juſtify our implicit acquieſcence in it.

But ſuperſtition ſet aſide, the Claſſicks are for ever our rightful, and revered Maſters in *Compoſition*; and our underſtandings bow before them: But when? When a maſter is wanted; which, ſometimes, (as I have ſhown) is not the caſe. Some are Pupils of nature only, nor go farther to ſchool: From ſuch we reap often a double advantage; they not only rival the reputation of the great antient authors, but alſo reduce the number of mean ones among the moderns. For when they enter on ſubjects which have been in former hands, ſuch is their Superiority, that, like a tenth Wave, they overwhelm,

and bury in oblivion all that went before: And thus not only enrich and adorn, but remove a load, and leſſen the labour, of the letter'd world.

"But, you ſay, ſince *Originals* can "ariſe from Genius only, and ſince "Genius is ſo very rare, it is ſcarce "worth while to labour a point ſo "much, from which we can rea-"ſonably expect ſo little." To ſhow that Genius is not ſo very rare as you imagine, I ſhall point out ſtrong inſtances of it, in a far diſtant quarter from that mentioned above. The minds of the School-men were almoſt as much cloiſtered as their bodies; they had but little learning, and few books; yet may the moſt learned be ſtruck with ſome aſtoniſhment at their ſo ſingu-

lar natural ſagacity, and moſt exquiſite edge of thought. Who would expect to find *Pindar* and *Scotus*, *Shakeſpear* and *Aquinas*, of the ſame Party? Both equally ſhew an *original*, unindebted, energy; the *Vigor igneus*, and *Cœleſtis origo* burns in both; and leaves us in doubt if Genius is more evident in the ſublime flights and beauteous flowers of poetry, or in the profound penetrations, and marvelouſly keen and minute diſtinctions, called the Thorns of the ſchools. There might have been more able Conſuls called from the plough, than ever arrived at that honour: Many a Genius, probably, there has been, which could neither write, nor read. So that Genius, that ſupreme Luſtre of literature, is leſs rare than you conceive.

By the praiſe of Genius we detract not from Learning; we detract not from the value of Gold, by ſaying that Diamond has greater ſtill. He who diſregards Learning, ſhows that he wants its aid; and he that overvalues it, ſhows that its aid has done him harm. Overvalued indeed it cannot be, if Genius, as to *Compoſition*, is valued more. Learning we thank, Genius we revere; That gives us pleaſure, This gives us rapture; That informs, This inſpires; and is itſelf inſpired; for Genius is from Heaven, Learning from man: *This* ſets us above the low, and illiterate; *That*, above the learned, and polite. Learning is borrowed knowlege; Genius is knowlege innate, and quite our own. Therefore, as *Bacon* obſerves, it may take a nobler name, and be called Wiſ-

dom;

dom; in which ſenſe of wiſdom, ſome are born wiſe.

But here a caution is neceſſary againſt the moſt fatal of errors in thoſe Automaths, thoſe ſelf-taught Philoſophers of our age, who ſet up Genius, and often, mere *fancied* Genius, not only above human Learning, but divine Truth. I have called Genius wiſdom; but let it be remembered, that in the moſt renowned ages of the moſt refined Heathen wiſdom (and theirs is not Chriſtian) "*the* "*world by wiſdom knew not God,* "*and it pleaſed God by the fooliſh-* "*neſs of preaching to ſave thoſe that* "*believed.*" In the Fairyland of Fancy, Genius may wander wild; there it has a creative power, and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of Chimeras. The wide

field of Nature alſo lies open before it, where it may range unconfined, make what diſcoveries it can, and ſport with its infinite objects uncontrouled, as far as viſible nature extends, painting them as wantonly as it will: But what Painter of the moſt unbounded and exalted Genius can give us the true portrait of a Seraph? He can give us only what by his own, or others eyes, has been ſeen; though that indeed infinitely compounded, raiſed, burleſqued, diſhonoured, or adorned: In like manner, who can give us divine Truth unrevealed? Much leſs ſhould any preſume to ſet aſide divine Truth when revealed, as incongruous to their own Sagacities.—Is this too ſerious for my ſubject? I ſhall be more ſo before I cloſe.

Having put in a Caveat againſt the moſt fatal of errors, from the too great indulgence of Genius, return we now to that too great ſuppreſſion of it, which is detrimental to Compoſition; and endeavour to reſcue the writer, as well as the man. I have ſaid, that ſome are born Wiſe; but they, like thoſe that are born Rich, by neglecting the cultivation and produce of their own Poſſeſſions, and by running in debt, may be beggared at laſt; and loſe their reputations, as younger brothers eſtates, not by being born with leſs abilities than the rich heir, but at too late an hour.

Many a great man has been loſt to himſelf, and the Publick, purely becauſe great ones were born before him. *Hermias* in his collections on

Homer's blindneſs, ſays, that *Homer* requeſting the Gods to grant him a ſight of *Achilles*, that Hero roſe, but in armour ſo bright, that it ſtruck *Homer* blind with the blaze. Let not the blaze of even *Homer*'s Muſe darken us to the diſcernment of our own Powers; which may poſſibly ſet us above the rank of *Imitators*; who, though moſt excellent, and even immortal (as ſome of them are) yet are ſtill but *Dii minorum gentium*, nor can expect the largeſt ſhare of incenſe, the greateſt profuſion of praiſe, on their ſecondary altars.

But farther ſtill: a ſpirit of *Imitation* hath many ill effects; I ſhall confine myſelf to three. *Firſt*, It deprives the liberal and politer arts of an advantage which the mechanic

enjoy;

enjoy: In theſe, men are ever endeavouring to go beyond their Predeceſſors; in the former, to follow them. And ſince copies ſurpaſs not their *Originals*, as ſtreams riſe not higher than their ſpring, rarely ſo high; hence, while arts Mechanic are in perpetual progreſs, and increaſe, the Liberal are in retrogradation, and decay. *Thoſe* reſemble Pyramids, are broad at bottom, but leſſen exceedingly as they riſe; *Thoſe* reſemble Rivers which, from a ſmall fountain-head, are ſpreading ever wider, and wider, as they run. Hence it is is evident, that different portions of underſtanding are not (as ſome imagine) allotted to different periods of time; for we ſee, in the ſame period, underſtanding riſing in one ſet of artiſts, and declining in another. Therefore *Nature* ſtands abſolved,

abſolved, and the inferiority of our Compoſition muſt be charged on ourſelves.

Nay, ſo far are we from complying with a neceſſity, which Nature lays us under, that, *Secondly*, by a ſpirit of *Imitation* we counteract Nature, and thwart her deſign. She brings us into the world all *Originals*: No two faces, no two minds, are juſt alike; but all bear Nature's evident mark of Separation on them. Born *Originals*, how comes it to paſs that we die *Copies*? That meddling Ape *Imitation*, as ſoon as we come to years of *Indiſcretion* (ſo let me ſpeak), ſnatches the Pen, and blots out nature's mark of Separation, cancels her kind intention, deſtroys all mental Individuality; the letter'd world no longer

conſiſts

conſiſts of Singulars, it is a Medly, a Maſs; and a hundred books, at bottom, are but One. Why are Monkies ſuch maſters of mimickry? Why receive they ſuch a talent at imitation? Is it not as the *Spartan* ſlaves received a licence for ebriety; that their Betters might be aſhamed of it?

The *Third* fault to be found with a ſpirit of *Imitation* is, that with great incongruity it makes us Poor, and Proud; makes us think little, and write much; gives us huge folios, which are little better than more reputable cuſhions to promote our repoſe. Have not ſome ſevenfold volumes put us in mind of *Ovid*'s ſevenfold channels of the *Nile* at the conflagration,

Oſtia ſeptem
Pulverulenta vacant ſeptem ſine flumine Valles.

Such

Such leaden labours are like *Lycurgus*'s iron money, which was ſo much leſs in value, than in bulk, that it required Barns for Strong-boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

But notwithſtanding theſe diſadvantages of *Imitation*, imitation muſt be the lot, (and often an honourable lot it is) of moſt writers. If there is a famine of *Invention* in the land, like *Joſeph*'s brethren, we muſt travel far for food; we muſt viſit the remote, and rich, Antients; but an inventive Genius may ſafely ſtay at home; that, like the Widow's cruſe, is divinely repleniſhed from within; and affords us a miraculous delight. Whether our own Genius be ſuch, or not, we diligently ſhould inquire; that we may not go a begging

with

with Gold in our purſe. For there is a Mine in man, which muſt be deeply dug ere we can conjecture its contents. Another often ſees that in us, which we ſee not ourſelves; and may there not be that in us which is unſeen by both? That there may, Chance often diſcovers, either by a luckily choſen Theme, or a mighty Premium, or an abſolute Neceſſity of exertion, or a noble ſtroke of Emulation from another's Glory; as that on *Thucydides* from hearing *Herodotus* repeat part of his Hiſtory at the *Olympic* Games: Had there been no *Herodotus*, there might have been no *Thucydides*, and the world's admiration might have begun at *Livy* for excellence in that province of the pen. *Demoſthenes* had the ſame ſtimulation on hearing *Calliſtratus*; or *Tully* might have been

the

the firſt of conſummate renown at the bar.

Quite clear of the diſpute concerning *antient and modern Learning*, we ſpeak not of Performance, but Powers. The modern powers are equal to thoſe before them; modern performance in general is deplorably ſhort. How great are the names juſt mentioned? Yet who will dare affirm, that as great may not riſe up in ſome future, or even in the preſent age? Reaſons there are why talents may not *appear*, none why they may not *exiſt*, as much in one period as another. An Evocation of vegetable fruits depends on rain, air, and ſun; an Evocation of the fruits of Genius no leſs depends on Externals. What a marvellous crop bore it in *Greece*,

and

and *Rome*? And what a marvellous ſunſhine did it there enjoy? What encouragement from the nature of their governments, and the ſpirit of their people? *Virgil* and *Horace* owed their divine talents to Heaven; their immortal works, to men; thank *Mæcenas*, and *Auguſtus* for them. Had it not been for theſe, the Genius of thoſe poets had lain buried in their aſhes. *Athens* expended on her Theatre, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, a tax levied for the ſupport of a war. *Cæſar* dropt his papers when *Tully* ſpoke; and *Philip* trembled at the voice of *Demoſthenes*: And has there ſhone but one *Tully*, one *Demoſthenes*, in ſo long a courſe of years? The powerful eloquence of them both in one ſtream, ſhould never bear me down into the melancholy

choly perſuaſion, that ſeveral have not been born, though they have not emerged. The ſun as much exiſts in a cloudy day, as in a clear; it is outward, accidental circumſtances that with regard to Genius either in nation, or age,

Collectas fugat nubes, ſolemque reducit. VIRG.

As great, perhaps, greater than thoſe mentioned (preſumptuous as it may ſound) may, poſſibly, ariſe; for who hath fathomed the mind of man? Its bounds are as unknown, as thoſe of the creation; ſince the birth of which, perhaps, not One has ſo far exerted, as not to leave his Poſſibilities beyond his Attainments, his Powers beyond his Exploits. Forming our judgments, altogether by what *has* been done, without knowing, or at all inquiring, what

poſſibly

poſſibly *might* have been done, we naturally enough fall into too mean an opinion of the human mind. If a ſketch of the divine Iliad before *Homer* wrote, had been given to mankind, by ſome ſuperior being, or otherwiſe, its execution would, probably, have appeared beyond the power of man. Now, to ſurpaſs it, we think impoſſible. As the Firſt of theſe opinions would evidently have been a miſtake, why may not the Second be ſo too? Both are founded on the ſame bottom; on our ignorance of the poſſible dimenſions of the mind of man.

Nor are we only ignorant of the dimenſions of the human mind in general, but even of our own. That a Man may be ſcarce leſs ignorant of his own powers, than an Oyſter

of its pearl, or a Rock of its diamond; that he may poſſeſs dormant, unſuſpected abilities, till awakened by loud calls, or ſtung up by ſtriking emergencies; is evident from the ſudden eruption of ſome men, out of perfect obſcurity, into publick admiration, on the ſtrong impulſe of ſome animating occaſion; not more to the world's great ſurprize, than their own. Few authors of diſtinction but have experienced ſomething of this nature, at the firſt beamings of their yet unſuſpected Genius on their hitherto dark Compoſition: The writer ſtarts at it, as at a lucid Meteor in the night; is much ſurprized; can ſcarce believe it true. During his happy confuſion, it may be ſaid to him, as to *Eve* at the Lake,

What

What there thou ſeeſt, fair creature! is thyſelf. MILT.

Genius, in this view, is like a dear Friend in our company under diſguiſe; who, while we are lamenting his abſence, drops his maſk, ſtriking us, at once, with equal ſurprize and joy. This ſenſation, which I ſpeak of in a writer, might favour, and ſo promote, the fable of poetic Inſpiration: A Poet of a ſtrong imagination, and ſtronger vanity, on feeling it, might naturally enough realize the world's mere compliment, and think himſelf truly inſpired. Which is not improbable; for Enthuſiaſts of all kinds do no leſs.

Since it is plain that men may be ſtrangers to their own abilities; and

by thinking meanly of them without juſt cauſe, may poſſibly loſe a name, perhaps, a name immortal; I would find ſome means to prevent theſe Evils. Whatever promotes Virtue, promotes ſomething more, and carries its good influence beyond the *moral* man: To prevent theſe evils, I borrow two golden rules from *Ethics*, which are no leſs golden in *Compoſition*, than in life. 1. *Know thyſelf*; 2dly, *Reverence thyſelf*. I deſign to repay Ethics in a future Letter, by two rules from Rhetoric for its ſervice.

1ſt. *Know thyſelf*. Of ourſelves it may be ſaid, as *Martial* ſays of a bad neighbour,

Nil tam prope, proculque nobis.

There-

Therefore dive deep into thy boſom; learn the depth, extent, biaſs, and full ſort of thy mind; contract full intimacy with the Stranger within thee; excite, and cheriſh every ſpark of Intellectual light and heat, however ſmothered under former negligence, or ſcattered through the dull, dark maſs of common thoughts; and collecting them into a body, let thy Genius riſe (if a Genius thou haſt) as the ſun from Chaos; and if I ſhould then ſay, like an *Indian*, *worſhip it*, (though too bold) yet ſhould I ſay little more than my ſecond rule enjoins, *(viz.) Reverence thyſelf.*

That is, let not great Examples, or Authorities, browbeat thy Reaſon into too great a diffidence of thyſelf: Thyſelf ſo reverence as to prefer the native growth of thy own

mind to the richeſt import from abroad; ſuch borrowed riches make us poor. The man who thus reverences himſelf, will ſoon find the world's reverence to follow his own. His works will ſtand diſtinguiſhed; his the ſole Property of them; which Property alone can confer the noble title of an *Author*; that is, of one who (to ſpeak accurately) *thinks*, and *compoſes*; while other invaders of the Preſs, how voluminous, and learned ſoever, (with due reſpect be it ſpoken) only *read*, and *write*.

This is the difference between thoſe two Luminaries in Literature, the well-accompliſhed Scholar, and the divinely-inſpired Enthuſiaſt; the *Firſt* is, as the bright morning ſtar; the *Second*, as the riſing ſun. The writer who neglects thoſe two rules

above will never ſtand alone; he makes one of a group, and thinks in wretched unanimity with the throng: Incumbered with the notions of others, and impoveriſhed by their abundance, he conceives not the leaſt embryo of new thought; opens not the leaſt viſta thro' the gloom of ordinary writers, into the bright walks of rare Imagination, and ſingular Deſign; while the true Genius is croſſing all publick roads into freſh untrodden ground; he, up to the knees in Antiquity, is treading the ſacred foot-ſteps of great examples, with the blind veneration of a bigot ſaluting the papal toe; comfortably hoping full abſolution for the ſins of his own underſtanding, from the powerful charm of touching his idol's Infallibility.

Such meanneſs of mind, ſuch proſtration of our own powers, proceeds from too great admiration of others. Admiration has, generally, a degree of two very bad ingredients in it; of Ignorance, and of Fear; and does miſchief in Compoſition, and in Life. Proud as the world is, there is more ſuperiority in it *given*, than *aſſumed*: And its Grandees of all kinds owe more of their elevation to the Littleneſs of others minds, than to the Greatneſs of their own. Were not proſtrate ſpirits their voluntary pedeſtals, the figure they make among mankind would not ſtand ſo high. *Imitators* and *Tranſlators* are ſomewhat of the pedeſtal-kind, and ſometimes rather raiſe their *Original*'s reputation, by ſhowing him to be by them inimitable, than their own. *Homer* has

been tranſlated into moſt languages; *Ælian* tells us, that the *Indians*, (hopeful tutors!) have taught him to ſpeak their tongue. What expect we from them? Not *Homer*'s *Achilles*, but ſomething, which, like *Patroclus*, aſſumes his name, and, at its peril, appears in his ſtead; nor expect we *Homer*'s *Ulyſſes*, glorioufly burſting out of his cloud into royal grandeur, but an *Ulyſſes* under diſguiſe, and a beggar to the laſt. Such is that inimitable Father of poetry, and Oracle of all the wiſe whom *Lycurgus* tranſcribed; and for an annual publick recital of whoſe works *Solon* enacted a law; that it is much to be feared, that his ſo numerous tranſlations are but as the publiſh'd teſtimonials of ſo many nations, and ages, that this author ſo divine is untranſlated ſtill.

But

But here,

Cynthius aurem
Vellit.—— VIRG.

and demands juſtice for his favourite, and ours. Great things he has done; but he might have done greater. What a fall is it from *Homer*'s numbers, free as air, lofty, and harmonious as the ſpheres, into childiſh ſhackles, and tinkling ſounds! But, in his fall, he is ſtill great——

Nor appears
Leſs than Archangel ruin'd, and the exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd.—— MILT.

Had *Milton* never wrote, *Pope* had been leſs to blame: But when in *Milton*'s Genius, *Homer*, as it were, perſonally roſe to forbid *Britons* doing him that ignoble wrong; it is

leſs

leſs pardonable, by that *effeminate* decoration, to put *Achilles* in petticoats a ſecond time: How much nobler had it been, if his numbers had rolled on in full flow, through the various modulations of *maſculine* melody, into thoſe grandeurs of ſolemn ſound, which are indiſpenſably demanded by the native dignity of Heroick ſong? How much nobler, if he had reſiſted the temptation of that *Gothic* Dæmon, which modern Poeſy taſting, became mortal? O how unlike the deathleſs, divine harmony of three great names (how juſtly join'd!), of *Milton*, *Greece*, and *Rome*? His Verſe, but for this little ſpeck of mortality, in its extreme parts, as his Hero had in his Heel; like him, had been invulnerable, and immortal. But, unfortunately, *that* was undipt in *Helicon*;

con; as *this*, in *Styx*. Harmony as well as Eloquence is eſſential to poeſy; and a murder of his Muſick is putting half *Homer* to death. *Blank* is a term of diminution; what we mean by blank verſe, is verſe unfallen, uncurſt; verſe reclaim'd, reinthron'd in the true *language of the Gods*; who never thunder'd, nor ſuffer'd their *Homer* to thunder, in Rhime; and therefore, I beg you, my Friend, to crown it with ſome nobler term; nor let the greatneſs of the thing lie under the defamation of ſuch a name.

But ſuppoſing *Pope*'s *Iliad* to have been perfect in its kind; yet it is a *Tranſlation* ſtill; which differs as much from an *Original*, as the moon from the ſun.

—*Phæben*

——Phœben alieno juſſerat igne
Impleri, ſolemque ſuo. CLAUD.

But, as nothing is more eaſy than to write originally wrong; Originals are not here recommended, but under the ſtrong guard of my firſt rule——*Know thyſelf*. *Lucian*, who was an Original, neglected not this rule, if we may judge by his reply to one who took ſome freedom with him. He was, at firſt, an apprentice to a Statuary; and when he was reflected on as ſuch, by being called *Prometheus*, he replied, "I am indeed the Inventor of new work, "the model of which I owe to none; "and, if I do not execute it well, I "deſerve to be torne by twelve Vul"turs, inſtead of one."

If

If ſo, O *Gulliver!* doſt thou not ſhudder at thy brother *Lucian*'s Vulturs hovering o'er thee? Shudder on! they cannot ſhock thee more, than Decency has been ſhock'd by thee. How have thy *Houyhnhnms* thrown thy judgment from its ſeat, and laid thy imagination in the mire? In what ordure haſt thou dipt thy pencil? What a monſter haſt thou made of the

—*Human face Divine?* MILT.

This writer has ſo ſatiriſed human nature, as to give a demonſtration in himſelf, that it deſerves to be ſatiriſed. But, ſay his wholeſale admirers, Few could *ſo* have written; true, and Fewer *would*. If it required great abilities to commit the fault, greater ſtill would have ſaved him from it. But whence ariſe ſuch warm advocates for ſuch a

per-

performance? From hence, (*viz.*) before a character is eſtabliſhed, Merit makes Fame; afterwards fame makes merit. *Swift* is not commended for this piece, but this piece for *Swift*. He has given us ſome beauties which deſerve all our praiſe; and our comfort is, that his faults will not become common; for none can be guilty of them, but who have Wit as well as Reputation to ſpare. His wit had been leſs wild, if his Temper had not joſtled his Judgment. If his favourite *Houyhnhunms* could write, and *Swift* had been one of them, every Horſe with him would have been an Aſs, and he would have written a panegyrick on mankind, ſaddling with much reproach the preſent heroes of his pen: On the contrary, being born amongſt men, and, of conſequence, piqued

by

by many, and peeviſh at more, he has blaſphemed a nature little lower than that of Angels, and aſſumed by far higher than they: But ſurely the contempt of the world is not a greater virtue, than the contempt of mankind is a vice. Therefore I wonder that, though forborn by others, the laughter-loving *Swift*, was not reproved by the venerable Dean, who could ſometimes be very grave.

For I remember, as I and others were taking with him an evening's walk, about a mile out of *Dublin*, he ſtopt ſhort; we paſſed on; but perceiving that he did not follow us, I went back; and found him fixed as a ſtatue, and earneſtly gazing upward at a noble elm, which in its uppermoſt branches was much withered, and decayed. Pointing at

it,

it, he ſaid, "I ſhall be like that "tree, I ſhall die at top." As in this he ſeemed to propheſy like the Sybils; if, like one of them, he had burnt part of his works, eſpecially *this* blaſted branch of a noble Genius, like her too, he might have riſen in his demand for the reſt.

Would not his friend *Pope* have ſucceeded better in an *original* attempt? Talents untried are talents unknown. All that I know, is, that, contrary to theſe ſentiments, he was not only an avowed profeſſor of Imitation, but a zealous recommender of it alſo. Nor could he recommend any thing better, except Emulation, to thoſe who write. One of theſe all writers muſt call to their aid; but aids they are of unequal repute. Imitation is inferiority con-

 feſſed;

feſſed; Emulation is ſuperiority conteſted, or denied; Imitation is ſervile, Emulation generous; That fetters, This fires; That may give a name; This, a name immortal: This made *Athens* to ſucceeding ages the rule of taſte, and the ſtandard of perfection. Her men of Genius ſtruck fire againſt each other; and kindled, by conflict, into glories no time ſhall extinguiſh. We thank *Eſchylus* for *Sophocles*; and *Parrhaſius* for *Zeuxis*; *Emulation*, for both. That bids us fly the general fault of *Imitators*; bids us not be ſtruck with the loud report of former fame, as with a Knell, which damps the ſpirits; but, as with a Trumpet, which inſpires ardour to rival the renown'd. Emulation exhorts us, inſtead of learning our diſcipline for ever, like raw troops,

troops, under antient leaders in compoſition, to put thoſe laurel'd veterans in ſome hazard of loſing their ſuperior poſts in glory.

Such is Emulation's high-ſpirited advice, ſuch her immortalizing call. *Pope* would not hear, pre-engaged with Imitation, which bleſſed him with all her charms. He choſe rather, with his nameſake of *Greece*, to triumph in the old world, than to look out for a new. His taſte partook the error of his Religion; it denied not worſhip to Saints and Angels; that is, to writers, who, canonized for ages, have received their apotheoſis from eſtabliſhed and univerſal fame. True Poeſy, like true Religion, abhors idolatry; and though it honours the memory of the exemplary, and takes them

willingly (yet cautiouſly) as guides in the way to glory; real, though unexampled, excellence is its only aim; nor looks it for any inſpiration leſs than divine.

Though *Pope*'s noble Muſe may boaſt her illuſtrious deſcent from *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, yet is an *Original* author more nobly born. As *Tacitus* ſays of *Curtius Rufus*, an *Original* author is born of himſelf, is his own progenitor, and will probably propagate a numerous offſpring of Imitators, to eternize his glory; while mule-like Imitators, die without iſſue. Therefore, tho' we ſtand much obliged for his giving us an *Homer*, yet had he doubled our obligation, by giving us——a *Pope*. Had he a ſtrong Imagination, and the true Sublime? That granted,

granted, we might have had two *Homers* inſtead of one, if longer had been his life; for I heard the dying ſwan talk over an Epic plan a few weeks before his deceaſe.

Bacon, under the ſhadow of whoſe great name I would ſhelter my preſent attempt in favour of *Originals*, ſays, "Men ſeem not to know their "own ſtock, and abilities; but "fancy their poſſeſſions to be "greater, and their abilities leſs, "than they really are." Which is, in effect, ſaying, "That we ought "to exert more than we do; and "that, on exertion, our probability "of ſucceſs is greater than we con-"ceive."

Nor have I *Bacon*'s opinion only, but his aſſiſtance too, on my ſide.

His mighty mind travelled round the intellectual world; and, with a more than eagle's eye, ſaw, and has pointed out blank ſpaces, or dark ſpots in it, on which the human mind never ſhone: Some of theſe have been enlightened ſince; ſome are benighted ſtill.

Moreover, ſo boundleſs are the bold excurſions of the human mind, that in the vaſt void beyond real exiſtence, it can call forth ſhadowy beings, and unknown worlds, as numerous, as bright, and, perhaps, as laſting, as the ſtars; ſuch quite-original beauties we may call Paradiſaical,

Natos ſine ſemine flores. OVID.

When ſuch an ample area for renowned adventure in *original* attempts

tempts lies before us, ſhall we be as mere leaden pipes, conveying to the preſent age ſmall ſtreams of excellence from its grand reſervoir in antiquity; and thoſe too, perhaps, mudded in the paſs? *Originals* ſhine, like comets; have no peer in their path; are rival'd by none, and the gaze of all: All other compoſitions (if they ſhine at all) ſhine in cluſters; like the ſtars in the galaxy; where, like bad neighbours, all ſuffer from all; each particular being diminiſhed, and almoſt loſt in the throng.

If thoughts of this nature prevailed; if Antients and Moderns were no longer conſidered as maſters and pupils, but as hard-match'd rivals for renown; then moderns, by the longevity of their labours, might, one day, become antients themſelves;

ſelves: And old Time, that beſt weigher of merits, to keep his balance even, might have the golden weight of an *Auguſtan* age in both his ſcales: Or rather our ſcale might deſcend; and antiquity's (as a modern match for it ſtrongly ſpeaks) might *kick the beam*.

And why not? For, conſider, *ſince* an impartial Providence ſcatters talents indifferently, as thro' all orders of perſons, ſo thro' all periods of time; *ſince*, a marvelous light, unenjoy'd of old, is pour'd on us by revelation, with larger proſpects extending our Underſtanding, with brighter objects enriching our Imagination, with an ineſtimable prize ſetting our Paſſions on fire, thus ſtrengthening every power that enables compoſition to ſhine; *ſince*, there

there has been no fall in man on this ſide *Adam*, who left no works, and the works of all other antients are our auxiliars againſt themſelves, as being perpetual ſpurs to our ambition, and ſhining lamps in our path to fame; *ſince*, this world is a ſchool, as well for intellectual, as moral, advance; and the longer human nature is at ſchool, the better ſcholar it ſhould be; *ſince*, as the moral world expects its glorious Milennium, the world intellectual may hope, by the rules of analogy, for ſome ſuperior degrees of excellence to crown her latter ſcenes; nor may it only hope, but muſt enjoy them too; for *Tully*, *Quintillian*, and all true critics allow, that virtue aſſiſts Genius, and that the writer will be more able, when better is the man——All theſe particulars,

culars, I ſay, conſider'd, why ſhould it ſeem altogether impoſſible, that heaven's lateſt editions of the human mind may be the moſt correct, and fair; that the day may come, when the moderns may proudly look back on the comparative darkneſs of former ages, on the children of antiquity; reputing *Homer*, and *Demoſthenes*, as the dawn of divine Genius; and on *Athens* as the cradle of infant Fame; what a glorious revolution would this make in the rolls of renown?

What a rant, ſay you, is here? —I partly grant it; Yet, conſider, my Friend! knowlege phyſical, mathematical, moral, and divine, increaſes; all arts and ſciences are making conſiderable advance; with them, all the accommodations, ornaments,

ments, delights, and glories of human life; and these are new food to the Genius of a polite writer; these are as the root, and composition, as the flower; and as the root spreads, and thrives, shall the flower fail? As well may a flower flourish, when the root is dead. It is Prudence to read, Genius to relish, Glory to surpass, antient authors; and Wisdom to try our strength in an attempt in which it would be no great dishonour to fail.

Why condemn'd *Maro* his admirable Epic to the flames? Was it not because his discerning eye saw some length of perfection beyond it? And what he saw, may not others reach? And who bid fairer than our countrymen for that glory? Something new may be expected from

Britons

Britons particularly; who ſeem not to be more ſever'd from the reſt of mankind by the ſurrounding ſea, than by the current in their veins; and of whom little more appears to be required, in order to give us *Originals*, than a conſiſtency of character, and making their compoſitions of a piece with their lives.

In polite compoſition, in natural, and mathematical, knowlege, we have great *Originals* already: *Bacon*, *Newton*, *Shakeſpeare*, *Milton*, have ſhowed us, that all the winds cannot blow the *Britiſh* flag farther, than an Original ſpirit can convey the *Britiſh* fame; their names go round the world; and what foreign Genius ſtrikes not as they paſs? Why ſhould not their poſterity embark in the ſame bold bottom of

new

new enterprize, and hope the ſame ſucceſs? Hope it they may; or you muſt aſſert, that either thoſe *Originals*, which we already enjoy, were written by Angels, or deny that we are Men. As *Simonides* ſaid to *Pauſanias*, reaſon ſhould ſay to the writer, "Remember thou art a "man." And for man not to graſp at all which is laudable within his reach, is a diſhonour to human nature, and a diſobedience to the divine; for as heaven does nothing in vain, its gift of talents implies an injunction of their uſe.

A friend of mine has obeyed that injunction; he has relied on himſelf, and with a Genius, as well moral, as *original* (to ſpeak in bold terms), has caſt out evil ſpirits; has made a convert to virtue of a ſpecies of com-

compoſition, once moſt its foe. As the firſt chriſtian Emperors expell'd dæmons, and dedicated their temples to the living God.

But you, I know, are ſparing in your praiſe of this author; therefore I will ſpeak of one, which is ſure of your applauſe. *Shakeſpeare* mingled no water with his wine, lower'd his Genius by no vapid Imitation. *Shakeſpeare* gave us a *Shakeſpeare*, nor could the firſt in antient fame have given us more. *Shakeſpeare* is not their Son, but Brother; their Equal, and that, in ſpite of all his faults. Think you this too bold? Conſider, in thoſe antients what is it the world admires? Not the fewneſs of their Faults, but the number and brightneſs of their Beauties; and if *Shakeſpeare* is their equal (as he doubt-

doubtleſs is) in that, which in them is admired, then is *Shakeſpeare* as great as they; and not impotence, but ſome other cauſe, muſt be charged with his defects. When we are ſetting theſe great men in competition, what but the comparative ſize of their Genius is the ſubject of our inquiry? And a giant loſes nothing of his ſize, tho' he ſhould chance to trip in his race. But it is a compliment to thoſe heroes of antiquity to ſuppoſe *Shakeſpeare* their equal only in dramatic powers; therefore, tho' his faults had been greater, the ſcale would ſtill turn in his favour. There is at leaſt as much Genius on the *Britiſh*, as on the *Grecian* ſtage, tho' the former is not ſwept ſo clean; ſo clean from violations not only of the *dramatic*, but *moral* rule; for an honeſt heathen,

then, on reading ſome of our celebrated ſcenes, might be ſeriouſly concerned to ſee, that our obligations to the religion of nature were cancel'd by Chriſtianity.

Johnſon, in the ſerious drama, is as much an Imitator, as *Shakeſpeare* is an Original. He was very learned, as *Sampſon* was very ſtrong, to his own hurt: Blind to the nature of Tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himſelf under it; we ſee nothing of *Johnſon*, nor indeed, of his admired (but alſo murdered) antients; for what ſhone in the Hiſtorian, is a cloud on the Poet; and *Cataline* might have been a good play, if *Saluſt* had never writ.

Who

Who knows if *Shakeſpeare* might not have thought leſs, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of *Johnſon*'s learning, as *Enceladus* under *Ætna*? His mighty Genius, indeed, thro' the moſt mountainous oppreſſion would have breathed out ſome of his inextinguiſhable fire; yet, poſſibly, he might not have riſen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement, and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramatic province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was maſter of two books, unknown to many of the profoundly read, tho' books, which, the laſt conflagration alone can deſtroy; the book of Nature, and that of Man. Theſe he had by heart, and has tran-

ſcribed many admirable pages of them, into his immortal works. Theſe are the fountain-head, whence the *Caſtalian* ſtreams of *original* compoſition flow; and theſe are often muddied by other waters, tho' waters in their diſtinct chanel, moſt wholeſome and pure: As two chymical liquors, ſeparately clear as cryſtal, grow foul by mixture, and offend the ſight. So that he had not only as much learning as his dramatic province required, but, perhaps, as it could ſafely bear.

Dryden, deſtitute of *Shakeſpeare*'s Genius, had almoſt as much learning as *Johnſon*, and, for the buſkin, quite as little taſte. He was a ſtranger to the Pathos, and, by numbers, expreſſion, ſentiment, and every other dramatic cheat, ſtrove

ſtrove to make amends for it; as if a Saint could make amends for the want of conſcience; a Soldier, for the want of valour; or a Veſtal, of modeſty. The noble nature of tragedy diſclaims an equivalent; like virtue, it demands the heart; and *Dryden* had none to give. Let Epic poets *think*, the tragedian's point is rather to *feel*; ſuch diſtant things are a tragedian and a poet, that the latter indulged, deſtroys the former. Look on *Barnwell*, and *Eſſex*, and ſee how as to theſe diſtant characters *Dryden* excells, and is excelled. But the ſtrongeſt demonſtration of his no-taſte for the buſkin, are his tragedies fringed with rhyme; which, in Epic poetry, is a ſore diſeaſe; in the Tragic, abſolute death. To *Dryden*'s enormity, *Pope*'s was a light offence. As lacemen are foes

to mourning, theſe two authors, rich in rhyme, were no great friends to thoſe ſolemn ornaments which the nature of their works required.

Muſt rhyme then, ſay you, be baniſhed? I wiſh the nature of our language could bear its intire expulſion; but our leſſer poetry ſtands in need of a toleration for it; it raiſes That, but it ſinks the Great; as ſpangles adorn children, but expoſe men. Prince *Henry* beſpangled all over in his oylet-hole ſuit, with glittering pins; and an *Achilles*, or an *Almanzor*, in this *Gothic* array; are very much on a level, as to the majeſty of the poet, and the prince. *Dryden* had a great, but a general capacity; and as for a general Genius, there is no ſuch thing in nature: A Genius implies the rays of

the mind concenter'd, and determined to ſome particular point; when they are ſcatter'd widely, they act feebly, and ſtrike not with ſufficient force, to fire, or diſſolve, the heart. As what comes from the Writer's heart, reaches ours; ſo what comes from his head, ſets our brains at work, and our hearts at eaſe. It makes a circle of thoughtful Critics, not of diſtreſſed Patients; and a paſſive audience, is what tragedy requires. Applauſe is not to be given, but extorted; and the ſilent lapſe of a ſingle tear, does the writer more honour, than the rattling thunder of a thouſand hands. Applauding hands, and dry eyes (which during *Dryden*'s theatrical reign often met), are a ſatire on the Writer's talent, and the Spectator's taſte. When by ſuch

judges the laurel is blindly given, and by ſuch a poet proudly received, they reſemble an intoxicated hoſte, and his taſteleſs gueſts, over ſome ſparkling adulteration, commending their Champaign.

But *Dryden* has his glory, tho' not on the ſtage: What an inimitable *original* is his Ode? A ſmall one, indeed, but of the firſt luſtre, and without a flaw; and, amid the brighteſt boaſts of antiquity, it may find a foil.

Among the brighteſt of the moderns, Mr. *Addiſon* muſt take his place. Who does not approach his character with great reſpect? They who refuſe to cloſe with the public in his praiſe, refuſe at their peril. But, if men will be fond of their

own

own opinions, ſome hazard muſt be run. He had, what *Dryden* ar. *Johnſon* wanted, a warm, and feeling heart; but, being of a grave and baſhful nature, thro' a philoſophic reſerve, and a ſort of moral prudery, he conceal'd it, where he ſhould have let looſe all his fire, and have ſhow'd the moſt tender ſenſibilities of heart. At his celebrated *Cato*, few tears are ſhed, but *Cato*'s own; which, indeed, are truly great, but unaffecting, except to the noble Few, who love their country better than themſelves. The bulk of mankind want virtue enough to be touched by them. His ſtrength of Genius has reared up one glorious image, more lofty, and truly golden, than that in the plains of *Dura*, for cool admiration to gaze at, and warm patriotiſm (how rare!) to wor-

ſhip; while thoſe two throbbing pulſes of the drama, by which alone it is ſhown to live, *terror* and *pity*, neglected thro' the whole, leave our unmoleſted hearts at perfect peace. Thus the poet, like his hero, thro' miſtaken excellence, and virtue overſtrain'd, becomes a ſort of ſuicide; and that which is moſt dramatic in the drama, dies. All his charms of poetry are but as funeral flowers, which adorn; all his noble Sentiments but as rich ſpices, which embalm, the tragedy deceaſed.

Of tragedy, Pathos is not only the life and ſoul, but the ſoul inextinguiſhable; it charms us thro' a thouſand faults. Decorations, which in this author abound, tho' they might immortalize other poeſy, are the *ſplendida peccata* which damn

damn the drama; while, on the contrary, the murder of all other beauties is a venial ſin, nor plucks the Laurel from the tragedian's brow.

Socrates frequented the plays of *Euripides*; and, what living *Socrates* would decline the theatre, at the repreſentation of *Cato*? *Tully*'s aſſaſſins found him in his litter, reading the *Medea* of the *Grecian* poet, to prepare himſelf for death. Part of *Cato* might be read to the ſame end. In the weight and dignity of moral reflection, *Addiſon* reſembles that poet, who was called the dramatic philoſopher; and is himſelf, as he ſays of *Cato*, *ambitiouſly ſententious*. But as to the ſingular talent ſo remarkable in *Euripides*, at melting down hearts into

the tender ſtreams of grief and pity, there the reſemblance fails. His beauties ſparkle, but do not warm; they ſparkle as ſtars in a froſty night. There is, indeed, a conſtellation in his play; there is the philoſopher, patriot, orator, and poet; but where is the tragedian? And, if that is wanting,

Cur in theatrum Cato ſevere veniſti?
MART.

And, when I recollect what paſſed between him and *Dryden*, in relation to this drama, I muſt add the next line,

An ideo tantum veneras, ut exires?

For, when *Addiſon* was a ſtudent at *Oxford*, he ſent up this play to his friend *Dryden*, as a proper perſon to recommend it to the Theatre, if

it

it deſerved it; who returned it, with very great commendation; but with his opinion, that, on the ſtage, it could not meet with its deſerved ſucceſs. But tho' the performance was denied the theatre, it brought its author on the public ſtage of life. For perſons in power inquiring ſoon after of the head of his college for a youth of parts, *Addiſon* was recommended, and readily received, by means of the great reputation which *Dryden* had juſt then ſpread of him above.

There is this ſimilitude between the poet and the play; as This is more fit for the cloſet than the ſtage; ſo, That ſhone brighter in private converſation than on the public ſcene. They both had a ſort of *local* excellency, as the heathen gods

a local

a local divinity; beyond ſuch a bound *they*, unadmired; and *theſe*, unadored. This puts me in mind of *Plato*, who denied *Homer* to the public; that *Homer*, which, when in his cloſet, was rarely out of his hand. Thus, tho' *Cato* is not calculated to ſignalize himſelf in the warm emotions of the theatre, yet we find him a moſt amiable companion, in our calmer delights of receſs.

Notwithſtanding what has been offered, This, in many views, is an exquiſite piece. But there is ſo much more of art, than nature in it, that I can ſcarce forbear calling it, an exquiſite piece of ſtatuary,

Where the ſmooth chiſel all its ſkill has ſhown,
To ſoften into fleſh the rugged ſtone.

ADDISON.

That

That is, where art has taken great pains to labour undramatic matter into dramatic life; which is impoſſible. However, as it is, like *Pygmalion*, we cannot but fall in love with it, and wiſh it was alive. How would a *Shakeſpeare*, or an *Otway*, have anſwered our wiſhes? They would have outdone *Prometheus*, and, with their heavenly fire, have given him not only life, but immortality. At their dramas (ſuch is the force of nature) the Poet is out of ſight, quite hid behind his *Venus*, never thought of, till the curtain falls. Art brings our author forward, he ſtands before his piece; ſplendidly indeed, but unfortunately; for the writer muſt be forgotten by his audience, during the repreſentation, if for ages he would be remembered by poſterity. In the

theatre, as in life, deluſion is the charm; and we are undelighted, the firſt moment we are undeceived. Such demonſtration have we, that the theatre is not yet opened, in which ſolid happineſs can be found by man; becauſe none are more than comparatively good; and folly has a corner in the heart of the wiſe.

A Genius fond of *ornament* ſhould not be wedded to the tragic muſe, which is in *mourning*: We want not to be diverted at an entertainment, where our greateſt pleaſure ariſes from the depth of our concern. But whence (by the way) this odd generation of pleaſure from pain? The movement of our melancholy paſſions is pleaſant, when we ourſelves are ſafe: We love to be,

at

at once, miſerable, and unhurt: So are we made; and ſo made, perhaps, to ſhow us the divine goodneſs; to ſhow that none of our paſſions were deſigned to give us pain, except when being pain'd is for our advantage on the whole; which is evident from this inſtance, in which we ſee, that paſſions the moſt painful adminiſter greatly, ſometimes, to our delight.

To cloſe our thoughts on *Cato*: He who ſees not much beauty in it, has no taſte for poetry; he who ſees nothing elſe, has no taſte for the ſtage. While it juſtifies cenſure, it extorts applauſe. It is much to be admired, but little to be felt. Had it not been a tragedy, it had been immortal; as it is a tragedy, its uncommon fate ſomewhat reſembles

his, who, for conquering gloriouſly, was condemn'd to die. Both ſhone, but ſhone fatally; becauſe in breach of their reſpective laws, the laws of the drama, and the laws of arms. But how rich in reputation muſt that author be, who can ſpare a *Cato*, without feeling the loſs.

That loſs by our author would ſcarce be felt; it would be but dropping a ſingle feather from a wing, that mounts him above his cotemporaries. He has a more refined, decent, judicious, and extenſive Genius, than *Pope*, or *Swift*. To diſtinguiſh this triumvirate from each other, and, like *Newton*, to diſcover the different colours in theſe genuine and meridian rays of literary light, *Swift* is a ſingular wit, *Pope* a correct poet, *Addiſon* a great author. *Swift* looked

looked on Wit as the *Jus divinum* to dominion and ſway in the world; and conſidered as uſurpation, all power that was lodged in perſons of leſs ſparkling underſtandings. This inclined him to tyranny in wit; *Pope* was ſomewhat of his opinion, but was for ſoftening tyranny into lawful monarchy; yet were there ſome acts of ſeverity in his reign. *Addiſon*'s crown was elective, he reigned by the public voice:

——*Volentes*
Per populos dat jura viamque affectat Olympo.
VIRG.

But as good books are the medicine of the mind, if we ſhould dethrone theſe authors, and conſider them, not in their royal, but their medicinal capacity, might it not then be ſaid, that *Addiſon* preſcribed a wholeſome and pleaſant

regimen, which was univerſally reliſhed, and did much good; that *Pope* preferred a purgative of ſatire, which, tho' wholeſome, was too painful in its operation; and that *Swift* inſiſted on a large doſe of ipecacuanha, which, tho' readily ſwallowed from the fame of the phyſician, yet, if the patient had any delicacy of taſte, he threw up the remedy, inſtead of the diſeaſe?

Addiſon wrote little in Verſe, much in ſweet, elegant, *Virgilian*, Proſe; ſo let me call it, ſince *Longinus* calls *Herodotus* moſt *Homeric*, and *Thucydides* is ſaid to have formed his ſtyle on *Pindar*. *Addiſon*'s compoſitions are built with the fineſt materials, in the taſte of the antients, and (to ſpeak his own language) on truly *Claſſic ground*:

And

And tho' they are the delight of the preſent age, yet am I perſuaded that they will receive more juſtice from poſterity. I never read him, but I am ſtruck with ſuch a diſheartening idea of perfection, that I drop my pen. And, indeed, far ſuperior writers ſhould forget his compoſitions, if they would be greatly pleaſed with their own.

But you ſay, that you know his value already——You know, indeed, the value of his writings, and cloſe with the world in thinking them immortal; but, I believe, you know not, that his name would have deſerved immortality, tho' he had never written; and that, by a better title than the pen can give: You know too, that his life was amiable; but, perhaps, you are ſtill to learn, that

his death was triumphant: That is a glory granted to very few: And the paternal hand of Providence, which, ſometimes, ſnatches home its beloved children in a moment, muſt convince us, that it is a glory of no great conſequence to the dying individual; that, when it is granted, it is granted chiefly, for the ſake of the ſurviving world, which may profit by his pious example, to whom is indulged the ſtrength, and opportunity to make his virtue ſhine out brighteſt at the point of death: And, here, permit me to take notice, that the world will, probably, profit more by a pious example of lay-extraction, than by one born of the church; the latter being, uſually, taxed with an abatement of influence by the bulk of mankind: Therefore, to ſmother a bright example of this

ſuperior

ſuperior good influence, may be reputed a ſort of murder injurious to the living, and unjuſt to the dead.

Such an example have we in *Addiſon*; which, tho' hitherto ſuppreſſed, yet, when once known, is inſuppreſſible, of a nature too rare, too ſtriking to be forgotten. For, after a long, and manly, but vain ſtruggle with his diſtemper, he diſmiſſed his phyſicians, and with them all hopes of life: But with his hopes of life he diſmiſſed not his concern for the living, but ſent for a youth nearly related, and finely accompliſhed, but not above being the better for good impreſſions from a dying friend: He came; but life now glimmering in the ſocket, the dying friend was ſilent: After a decent, and proper pauſe, the youth ſaid,

" Dear Sir! you ſent for me: I be-
" lieve, and I hope, that you have
" ſome commands; I ſhall hold
" them moſt ſacred:" May diſtant ages not only hear, but feel, the reply! Forcibly graſping the youth's hand, he ſoftly ſaid, " See in what " peace a Chriſtian can die." He ſpoke with difficulty, and ſoon expired. Thro' Grace divine, how great is man? Thro' divine Mercy, how ſtingleſs death? Who would not thus expire?

What an ineſtimable legacy were thoſe *few dying words* to the youth beloved? What a glorious ſupplement to his own valuable fragment on the truth of Chriſtianity? What a full demonſtration, that his fancy could not feign beyond what his virtue could reach? For when he would

would ſtrike us moſt ſtrongly with the grandeur of *Roman* magnanimity, his dying hero is ennobled with this ſublime ſentiment,

While yet I live, let me not live in vain.

CATO.

But how much more ſublime is that ſentiment when realized in life; when diſpelling the languors, and appeaſing the pains of a laſt hour; and brightening with illuſtrious action the dark avenue, and all-awful confines of an Eternity? When his ſoul ſcarce animated his body, ſtrong Faith, and ardent Charity, animated his ſoul into divine ambition of ſaving more than his own. It is for our honour, and our advantage, to hold him high in our eſteem: For the better men are, the more they will admire him; and the more

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they admire him, the better will they be.

By undrawing the long-closed curtain of his death-bed, have I not shewed you a stranger in him whom you knew so well? Is not this of your favourite author,

——*Notâ major imago?* VIRG.

His compositions are but a noble preface; the grand work is his death: That is a work which is read in heaven: How has it join'd the final approbation of angels to the previous applause of men? How gloriously has he opened a splendid path, thro' fame immortal, into eternal peace? How has he given religion to triumph amidst the ruins of his nature? And, stronger than death,

death, riſen higher in virtue when breathing his laſt?

If all our men of Genius had ſo breathed their laſt; if all our men of Genius, like him, had been men of Genius for *eternals*; *then*, had we never been pained by the report of a latter end——oh! how unlike to this? But a little to balance our pain, let us conſider, that ſuch reports as make us, at once, adore, and tremble, are of uſe, when too many there are, who muſt tremble before they will adore; and who convince us, to our ſhame, that the ſureſt refuge of our endanger'd virtue is in the fears, and terrors of the diſingenuous human heart.

" But reports, you ſay, may be " falſe; and you farther aſk me,

" If

" If all reports were true, how came
" an anecdote of ſo much honour
" to human nature, as mine, to lie
" ſo long unknown? What inauſpi-
" cious planet interpoſed to lay its
" luſtre under ſo laſting, and ſo
" ſurprizing an eclipſe?"

The fact is indiſputably true; nor are you to rely on me for the truth of it: My report is but a ſecond edition: It was publiſhed before, tho' obſcurely, and with a cloud before it. As clouds before the ſun are often beautiful; ſo, this of which I ſpeak. How finely pathetic are thoſe two lines, which this ſo ſolemn, and affecting ſcene inſpired?

He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
A price for knowlege, taught us how to die.

TICKELL.

With

With truth wrapped in darkneſs, ſo ſung our oracle to the public; but explained himſelf to me: He was preſent at his patron's death, and that account of it here given, he gave to me before his eyes were dry: By what means *Addiſon taught us how to die*, the Poet left to be made known by a late, and leſs able hand; but one more zealous for his patron's glory: Zealous, and impotent, as the poor *Ægyptian*, who gather'd a few ſplinters of a broken boat, as a funeral-pile for the great *Pompey*, ſtudious of doing honour to ſo renown'd a name: Yet had not this poor plank (permit me, here, ſo to call this imperfect page) been thrown out, the chief article of his patron's glory, would probably have been ſunk for ever, and late ages had received but a fragment of his

fame;

fame: A fragment glorious indeed, for his Genius how bright! But to commend him for compoſition, tho' immortal, is detraction *now*; if there our encomium ends: Let us look farther to that concluding ſcene, which ſpoke human nature not unrelated to the divine. To that let us pay the long, and large arrear of our greatly poſthumous applauſe.

This you will think a long digreſſion; and juſtly; if that may be called a digreſſion, which was my chief inducement for writing at all: I had long wiſhed to deliver up to the public this ſacred depoſit, which by Providence was lodged in my hands; and I entered on the preſent undertaking partly as an introduction to that, which is more worthy to ſee the light; of which I gave an intima-

intimation in the beginning of my Letter: For this is the *monumental marble* there mentioned, to which I promiſed to conduct you; this is the *ſepulchral lamp*, the long-hidden luſtre of our accompliſhed countryman, who now riſes, as from his tomb, to receive the regard ſo greatly due to the dignity of his death; a death to be diſtinguiſhed by tears of joy; a death which angels beheld with delight.

And ſhall that, which would have ſhone conſpicuous amid the reſplendent lights of Chriſtianity's glorious morn, by theſe dark days be dropped into oblivion? Dropped it is; and dropped by our ſacred, auguſt, and ample regiſter of renown, which has entered in its marble-memoirs the dim ſplendor of far inferior worth:

Tho'

Tho' ſo laviſh of praiſe, and ſo talkative of the dead, yet is it ſilent on a ſubject, which (if any) might have taught its unletter'd ſtones to ſpeak: If powers were not wanting, a monument more durable than thoſe of marble, ſhould proudly riſe in this ambitious page, to the new, and far nobler *Addiſon*, than that which you, and the public have ſo long, and ſo much admired; nor this nation only; for it is *Europe*'s *Addiſon*, as well as ours; tho' *Europe* knows not half his title to her eſteem; being as yet unconſcious that the *dying Addiſon* far outſhines her *Addiſon immortal:* Would we reſemble him? Let us not limit our ambition to the leaſt illuſtrious part of his character; heads, indeed, are crowned on earth; but hearts only are crowned in heaven: A truth,

which,

which, in ſuch an *age of authors*, ſhould not be forgotten.

It is piouſly to be hoped, that this narrative may have ſome effect, ſince all liſten, when a death-bed ſpeaks; and regard the perſon departing as an Actor of a part, which the great maſter of the drama has appointed us to perform to-morrow: This was a *Roſcius* on the ſtage of life; his Exit how great? Ye lovers of virtue! *plaudite*: And let us, my Friend! ever "remember his end, "as well as our own, that we may "never do amiſs." I am,

Dear SIR,

Your moſt obliged,

humble Servant.

P. S. How far *Addiſon* is an *Original*, you will ſee in my next; where I deſcend from this conſecrated ground into his ſublunary praiſe: And great is the deſcent, tho' into noble heights of *intellectual* power.